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ABSTRACT

Begun successfully in 1963 as part of the larger Illinois Plan for the Education of Gifted Children, the demonstration center in "Anytown", a small northwestern Illinois community, was phased out after four years of operation. New curricula for grades 7-12 were developed at the University of Illinois for the Anytown and other similar Illinois demonstration centers. The Anytown center focused on the junior high level and initially emphasized science and social studies, although the English and mathematics programs were better received. Students were chosen for the program on the basis of high standardized test scores and elementary school achievement. The program's initial success was attributed to support by key administrators, faculty members, and outside consultants; training provided for teachers; attitudes of participating teachers towards the students; and the positive relationship between the center's director and the teachers. The center's ultimate failure was attributed to many factors, among which were contrasting leadership styles of the first two directors, the departure of the consultants and influential administrators, the spotlighting of underlying problems in the system, the unexpected informal influence of prominent community members, and a lack of understanding of community dynamics. Student and teacher reactions were not always positive. (SE)

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ILLINOIS PLAN FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

RETURN TO
CIRCE MATERIALS CENTER

Yesterday and Today: A Case Study of Educational Change in a Small Community

By

Dr. Gordon Hoke
Mr. Fred Osburn

RC012550

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Gordon A. Hoke and Mr. Fred Osburn were both directors of the demonstration center in "Anytown" that provides the basis for this study. Dr. Hoke is presently director of Field Services for the National Laboratory on Early Childhood Education at the University of Illinois. He was also a consultant for the Department of Program Development for Gifted Children and held the rank of Associate Professor in Education at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois. Dr. Hoke has been associated with the Illinois Plan for the Education of Gifted Children since its operational inception in 1963 and is well equipped to describe the internal operations of this project.

Mr. Fred Osburn replaced Dr. Hoke as the director of the demonstration center that is the focus of this study. He is presently the director of demonstration programs for the East Central Illinois Development and Service Unit in Charleston, Illinois. In addition to his present position, Mr. Osburn has been extremely active in gifted programs throughout Illinois for the past five years. He has directed a number of summer institute programs, taught classes on the education of the gifted at Bradley University, and served as a consultant to school districts throughout Illinois.

INTRODUCTION

BY

Douglas L. Paulson
Coordinator IPELD Project

The case study you are about to read analyzes the events in the rise and fall of one special program in a school district of Northwestern Illinois. In this particular situation, the special project about to be described was a part of a much larger program, namely the Illinois Plan for the Education of Gifted Children.

It is extremely important that the reader have some background knowledge of this program to obtain a greater depth understanding of the many issues presented in this study. Terminology, in particular, may prove to be a major stumbling block unless the reader has sufficient insight into the larger context in which the special programs of Anytown, Illinois was spawned.

The remainder of this section will, therefore, be devoted to a general discussion of the Illinois Plan. Readers who are already familiar with this project may want to skip this section and begin their analysis of one of the most interesting and pertinent studies of the operational features in the process of educational change.

THE ILLINOIS PLAN[1]

The Illinois Plan has as its major feature two forthright objectives. The first of these objectives concerns a major thrust to encourage schools throughout Illinois to develop special programs for gifted and/or talented youngsters. Programs developed under the auspices of the Illinois Gifted Program are to emphasize not only the rigid definitions of the gifted child, but are to emphasize the theme of talent

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[1]The phrase - "Illinois Plan" - is short for "The Illinois Plan for Gifted Students" administered by the Department of Program Development for Gifted Students, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of Illinois.

retrieval.

Utilizing the concept of talent retrieval, school districts are, at least in theory, to establish programs that will identify and nurture various forms of talent. Among these various forms are: creativity, leadership, skills associated with the kinesthetic arts, and especially the potential hidden talents of minority groups that are often obscured by the social and cultural demands of a white, Anglo-Saxon America.

A 1959 study concerning the extent and emphasis of gifted programs in Illinois schools did not reveal, in the minds of those interested in this topic, a very encouraging trend. Illinois schools, as had schools throughout the nation, had in large measure de-emphasized special programs for gifted students after an energetic, but brief surge in the early and middle "30's."

It was obvious that to offset the apparent disinterest among educators in Illinois for gifted programs, the usual processes for creating awareness and change (conferences, journals, etc.) would not be appropriate.[2] This awareness on the part of the early proponents of the Illinois Plan led them to the consideration of the second major objective of the Illinois Plan - the creation of a systematic process to: (1) narrow the gap between the ideas developed from basic or applied research and their eventual implementation in the field; and (2) sustain educational innovation once they have been initially implemented. It was this second objective that provided the form of the Illinois Plan.

There are five basic parts to the Illinois Plan. These are:

1. Reimbursement to public school districts in Illinois to provide funds for program development at the local level. Funds from this part of the program are typically used to purchase special text materials, pay for costs associated with identifying

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[2]This statement should not be construed by the reader to imply the typical processes for creating awareness and change are of any significant value in areas other than the gifted.

different forms of talent and the in-service training of teachers (including costs of travel, professional literature, and consultants).

2. Demonstration and Service Centers. Utilizing, in part, the frame of reference provided the field of agriculture by rural sociologists - a number of school districts throughout Illinois were selected as "demonstration centers." School districts, so designated, were to feature one or more unique and innovative programs designed to retrieve and/or nurture talent from a specific student population.[3] The demonstration centers, in theory at least, are analogous to the county demonstration plots in agriculture.

Each demonstration center was administered by a program director (hereafter referred to as a demonstration center director). This person, whose salary incidently is totally reimbursed by the State of Illinois, is responsible for obtaining and scheduling visits to the center, meeting and discussing the local program,with visitors while at the center, maintaining contact with visitors after they return to their own districts, and in general encouraging school personnel to adopt different practices in regard to the education of gifted children.

The Illinois program often considers the directors of demonstration centers to be agents of change or in short "change agents." These postions are roughly analogous to the county agricultural extension agent.

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[3] Most of the initial as well as current "demonstration center" feature programs that have been designed for the academically talented student. Only a few exceptions to this rule can be found in Illinois after five years the Illinois Plan has been in operation.

3. Experimental projects. The Department of Program Development for Gifted Children also funds a variety of research and evaluation programs. In most cases, the research programs (mostly applied research) are centered in a university structure. A number of public schools, however, are conducting a variety of small research studies relative to the education of gifted children.

4. Study-Training Programs. As one attempt to bridge the gap between awareness (what often occurs as the result of a visit to a demonstration center), adoption, and eventually implementation at the local level, a number of study-training programs have been instituted throughout the state at various times. These study-training opportunities take on a number of forms - fellowships for university study, academic year fellowships for specialized study, internships, conferences, workshops, and summer regional institutes.

Summer regional institutes usually developed and administered by a demonstration center are by far the most prevalent form of training approach. In the past five years, over 3,000 educators in Illinois have received training that pertains to the education of gifted children.

5. Consultant Services. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction will provide program consultants in the area of the gifted to schools in Illinois desiring these services.

The study that follows this brief introduction descirbes one aspect of the Illinois Plan - the demonstration center and its potential impact in the local school district setting. The problems and difficulties in regard to the development and maintenance of a demonstration program are both many and complex. The task of demonstration in education is particularly difficult because of the traditionally

closed and conservative stance taken by education and educators throughout the years. Many of the difficulties and complexities are succinctly revealed in the following paper.

For those interested in the process of educational change the next hour or so should be extremely interesting.

Yesterday and Today: A Case Study of

Educational Change in a Small Community

Foreword

This is a report on the dynamics of educational change. Like so many efforts of its type, it is incomplete, quite subjective, at least in places, and raises more questions than it answers. But we feel that it has one distinctive feature setting it apart from most other descriptions: namely, the concentration on student reactions.

Don Glines notes that failure to really involve pupils in the planning and implementation of educational change is the weakest dimension of current programs.[1] Perhaps the most significant conclusion the authors gathered from their work was that a project which did more than any of its counterparts to involve students in its operations apparently had little lasting impact on them. As they responded during the course of follow-up interviews, "It didn't grab them." Their remarks are echoed in numerous accounts prepared by reputable authorities.[2]

Our activities in this project also confirmed the validity of many truisms concerning educational change, among them the need to directly involve classroom teachers in such programs. However, we would like to offer an additional hypothesis, one that has received little testing. It is our belief that failure to build in provisions for feedback from students seriously limits the validity and reliability of all other forms of data. Furthermore, we submit that this oversight is the cause of so many "unexplainable" failures in programs of change. Lippitt attributes this deficiency to a lack of instruments for gathering data from pupils;[3] but this weakness could easily be part of the general neglect of student opinion.

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[1] Don E. Glines, "Planning and Effecting Needed Changes in Individual Schools," Designing Education for the Future, No. 3 (N. Y.; Citation Press, 1967), p. 176.

[2] See, for example, Ronald Lippitt, "Roles and Processes in Curriculum Development and Change," Strategy for Curriculum Change, ASCD Seminar on Strategy for Curriculum Change, January, 1965, p. 11.

[3] Ibid.

The Setting

Anytown is a small community of approximately 15,000 inhabitants located in northwestern Illinois. At first glance, it appears to be a fairly typical market town, and in fact, the office of the executive secretary of the National Farmers Organization is not far away. Anytown also has a cluster of industrial plants situated along the river banks. In addition, a few branch offices of national concerns--e.g., meat packing plants, are located within easy driving distance of the town. Their combined presence has created two factors which have a direct influence on school functions in the city.

First, a sizable colony of Mexican-Americans work in the steel mills and hardware plants. They represent the lower-class element of the community and, in company with similar groups living in other American communities, have been forced to live in one section of the town.[1] Second, a surprisingly large number of upper-income families, stemming from the presence of the industrial and business enterprises can be found. Many of their homes are concentrated in an outlying K-8 district feeding into the high school.

A New Program--Stage I

In 1959, on the recommendations of the Illinois School Problems Commission, the General Assembly established a Special Study Project for Gifted Children. Funds appropriated by the State Legislature were combined with a U. S. Office of Education pilot grant to support 44 study projects in school districts and universities. A noted scholar, Dr. James J. Gallagher, then Associate Director of the Institute for Research on Exceptional Children, University of Illinois, was instrumental in preparing the final recommendations for legislative action.[2] Approval for comprehensive

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[1] Approximately 1500 Mexican-Americans live in the city. A very small number of Negroes reside in the same residential area.

[2] Dr. Gallagher is now Associate Commissioner, Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, USOE.

state-wide program was signified by an appropriation of about 7 million dollars in 1962.[3]

The decision to establish a network of demonstration centers was based on efforts in the field of agricultural innovation, and, to a degree, reflected the findings of a study of educational change processes in New York.[4]

These early decisions were to have a lasting effect on the demonstration centers. It is now clearly evident that educational institutions have unique characteristics which seriously reduce the margin of safety in generalizing from activities in other fields. And Brickell's study in New York relied too heavily on information gleaned from exchanges with administrators. Superintendents of schools involved in the original pilot effort were genuinely attracted to the program. Later it became evident to them that a project ostensibly designed for the education of gifted children contained significant undertones of educational change. This gradual awareness was to have repercussions in all of the demonstration centers, and particularly so in Anytown. Moreover, the preponderance of superintendents, involved in the initial planning created additional difficulties for the total program. To illustrate: The role of building principals, department chairmen, and key teachers in executing the "nuts and bolts" requirements of educational change was underestimated.[5] Implications of the Gifted Program for ongoing school activities were likewise overlooked. Both of these issues produced major obstacles for the two men (the authors) who were to serve

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[3]The appropriations have risen steadily since then, with the most recent amount standing at $9,000,000.

[4]Brickell, Henry M. Organizing New York State for Educational Change, (Albany, N. Y.: State Education Department, 1961).

[5]We are in definite agreement with Richard Miller, who writes: "Without in any way denying the key role of administrators, which can be well documented, one can say that very little research is available on the role of classroom teachers, supervisors, and curriculum specialists in change." "Needed Research and Development in the Process of Change," A MultiDisciplinary Focus on Educational Change, ed. by Richard I Miller; Bulletin of the Bureau of School Service, College of Education, University of Kentucky, December, 1965, p. 73. The importance of the individual building principal as compared with that of the superintendent, is cited in Staff Leadership in Public Schools: A Sociological Inquiry. (N. Y.: John Wiley & Sons, 1965), p. 152-154.

as directors of the demonstration center project in Anytown.

A New Program--Stage II

Most of the new curricula introduced into the demonstration centers were developed and tested originally in the Curriculum Development Laboratory (University High School) of the University of Illinois. Since the "Lab School" operates only at the secondary level--grades 7-12--the initial projects focused mainly on junior high school offerings.

The assessment team from the Lab School visited Anytown's junior high in the spring of 1962. After two rather short stays, it was decided to demonstrate science and social studies materials in the school. Ironically, in another year, English and mathematics classes stood out as the strongest components of the demonstration program. The reasons for this change starkly reveal the complexities of curriculum development and attest to its direct relationship to community affairs, especially in small towns.

Selection of the science department was based on the outstanding ability of its chairman. Ostensibly a wise choice, its effects were nullified on the occasion of his untimely death in October, 1963. His replacement, an inexperienced teacher trained in the University Lab School, experienced severe difficulties in relating to young adolescents and underwent a trying 18 months before moving on.

Failure of the assessment team to adequately discern and evaluate community opinion jeopardized the social studies project from its inception. The new curriculum relied heavily on material taken from the social sciences rather than a study of history. Virtually all junior high schools in Illinois, especially those reflecting a rural orientation, offer a traditional approach to American history at the eighth grade level. Sucessful completion of a state-wide achievement test on national, state, and local government is required for promotion from the eighth grade and it further emphasized the desirability of offering American history at this time. The effects of this contrast between the new curriculum with its social science

themes and long accepted practices were underestimated. Consequently, the social studies project was plagued with recurring controversies, and today the demonstration teachers and the project materials are no longer in the Anytown school system.

Favorable responses to the projects in English and mathematics represented a combination of factors.

The chief English instructor was the department chairman, a woman possessing a strong background of academic preparation, particularly in the fields of logic and philosophy.[6] Also, the English curriculum received an extremely favorable reception from parents, teachers, and students. In fact, a study of the demonstration centers noted that visitors to English classes did more than any other group to institute changes in their own classrooms and schools.[7]

Of all the curriculum projects introduced into the Anytown demonstration center, the University of Illinois Committee on School Mathematics (UICSM) program received the most acclaim. In many ways, it represented a classic version of the requirements for lasting educational change.

Students in the demonstration program regarded math classes as their favorite sessions. Two young men served as instructors. Both had excellent backgrounds in mathematics; furthermore, the UICSM program provided summer training opportunities for junior and senior high teachers. A consultant from the program made regular visits to participating schools. She was warmly received and highly respected. Best of all, however, the chairman of the mathematics-science department in the high school quickly became interested in the UICSM program and lent his personal and professional support to it. An older man, viewed by the community as a superb teacher and conscientious person, his blessing and eventual participation gave an inestimable boost

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[6]Close observations of teacher and student performances suggested that individuals with an ability to see logical relationships succeeded best in the new projects.

[7]Ernie House, "Demonstration Center Visits Resulting in Action," 1966. (mimeo) p. 14.

to the "new math" in Anytown. As a result, its secondary schools are one of the few systems in Illinois to have a sequential modern math program taught by instructors actually trained in proper use of the materials.

Our experience in Anytown leads us to question whether curriculum change can be implemented in a meaningful fashion without the support of teachers regarded by the community as "protectors" of the institution and its students.

A New Program--Stage III

Curriculum materials featured in Anytown's demonstration center represented their developer's interpretation of accelerated content. For example, the UICSM program was used for the first time in public schools with seventh graders. Students chosen for the demonstration classes were high achievers in the elementary schools and also were required to have top scores from standardized achievement tests.[8] Reliance on these measures has inherent limitations, as do all forms of grouping. But operating in the context of a special program, these limitations often spotlighted other weaknesses of the local schools.

True, Anytown Junior High School had engaged in ability grouping prior to its involvement in the Gifted Program. There was apparent acceptance of the practice, although teachers expressed misgivings about the "labeling" of children. The federal and state programs, with their university consultants, demonstration center directors appointed from outside the system,[9] special materials, etc., added new lustre and status to membership in honors classes. Competition between families and among the elementary schools greatly increased as an aftermath of the new program. Generally speaking, the system was not prepared for the intensified rivalry.

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[8]Students in the demonstration program were grouped according to ability in separate subject matter areas. About 10 annually qualified for all 4 classes. Each group averaged about 30 to a class; over-all, approximately 60 youngsters were involved from each grade level.

[9]Most of the demonstration centers appointed directors from outside the local system. There is still no consensus on the preferred way of selecting such personnel.

High achievers are found in middle-class families, the college-oriented households. Anytown was no exception to this maxim. Sons and daughters of prominent families dominated the rosters of "gifted" classes. The gap between the children of executive families cited on page 1 and the Mexican-American youngsters was increased. School officials evidently were not aware--or unable to act on the awareness--that adding new resources to programmatic development for high achievers presented a concomitant responsibility to devote renewed efforts to the needs of other pupils.

Approximately 70 percent of the Mexican-American pupils attended one grade school. When selection of students to participate in demonstration classes was made in the spring, it was not uncommon for top ranked students in the former school to rate below high-average pupils in more favored areas. In this manner, the Gifted Program emphasized the problems presented by strict adherence to a neighborhood school philosophy.

Our experience in Anytown confirmed one of the fundamental issues confronting proponents of neighborhood schools. If a system is to operate on this principle, then the individual school should be granted sufficient flexibility to cope with the varying needs and strengths of its actual neighborhood community. Too often, as in Anytown, the principle is reflected in a philosophy and a procedure, but does not affect the classroom. Instead, neighborhood schools are forced to adhere to a preconceived idea of what they should be--usually the same in <u>all</u> sections of the city--without any drastic departures in practice from the norm of customary operations.[10]

Despite the problems cited in the foregoing account, the demonstration center seemingly worked well its first two years, 1963-65, and received a commendation for meritorious services to the Gifted Program. Only one other center (out of 24) was awarded a similar accolade, and it was functioning in a suburban school system. The

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[10]Readers will find an excellent treatment of the neighborhood school controversy in the March 23, 1967 issue of the <u>Reporter</u>. The article--"What is Racial Balance in the Schools?"--also contains some penetrating insights into the Coleman Report, particularly as the latter pertains to grouping procedures.

director at that time attributed this honor to the excellent cooperation of demonstration teachers and the outstanding efforts of the original demonstration class, a group of youngsters who are now juniors in high school.

Two years later the demonstration center was phased out, over half of the original corps of demonstration teachers were no longer in local classrooms, and much of the work in curriculum development had left no discernible mark.

The Way It Was

Why were we unable to sustain the effort in Anytown? Some of the reasons are obvious; others are more subtle. Still others have no doubt escaped us. Above all, our experiences in the community and its schools point to the intricate demands confronting programs of social change, for the school is one form of an ongoing social system. Goodenough provides background for understanding the enormity of the problem.[11]

> Several factors appear to contribute to this failure to profit in practice from the lessons already learned. The present state of knowledge is inadequate; what is known is poorly disseminated; and administrators and development agents are unwilling or unable to undertake the sometimes drastic modifications of their own established attitudes and habits that are required if present knowledge is to be successfully applied.

Contrasting Styles of Leadership

One of the authors, the first director in Anytown, devoted the major portion of his time to working with demonstration teachers and their classes. There is no question but that he helped to emphasize the "special" nature of the program, and, perhaps, to increase the friction cited on page 6. Moreover, in the words of his successor, he "held the hands of those demonstration teachers too d _____d much!"

Conversely, the latter devoted much of his energy to activities apart from the system, usually by conducting inservice training workshops for other districts. One of the demonstration teachers who worked with both men remarked: "There's no question that _____ is absolutely great away from here; but at home it's (the program) simply not working."

Granted that there were marked contrasts in individual styles of operation--of which the above is only one small illustration--background elements had a much greater impact on demonstration center operations than the influence of local directors.

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[11] Ward H. Goodenough, Cooperation in Change: An Anthropological Approach to Community Development. (N. Y.: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Science Editions, 1966), p. 24.

Outside Consultants

The coordinator of the state-wide demonstration program was a research associate assigned to special projects at the University of Illinois. A person of great charisma, capable of arousing intense devotion and loyalty, the coordinator had an incalculable influence on the program during its formative years. In large part, it was his decision to move more strongly into inservice training that caused the second wave of directors to spend more time away from its home base.

From 1963 to 1965, the central coordinator was assisted by a cadre of consultants working with the curriculum projects developed in the Lab School. The merits of the math consultant were previously described. Others were not as capable in field work, but together they performed a function that all of us underrated in the early stages. They comprised a communications link, creating ties between the campus and the outlying demonstration centers and among the centers as well. Although we did not realize it at the time, the phasing out of the USOE pilot grant and the simultaneous loss of consultant aid were the beginning of the end for many of the demonstration centers, particularly those located far from the campus in non-suburban areas.[12]

The significance of this action for local operations was graphically portrayed in the statements of an Anytown administrator. A resident of the community for over 30 years, he wistfully remarked during an interview in March, 1967:

> In the early days we could see that we were experimenting for a purpose. Now that's all gone. I hate to say it, but somehow we have the feeling of having been used. Out here you simply can't ask us to engage in new programs without support from some other source.

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[12]Joseph Featherstone tells of similar work by consultants functioning in a different setting. Citing the role of government inspectors of education in England, Featherstone notes that as their duties took on more and more of an advisory character, "they became important agents for disseminating new ideas." Some of the most energetic agencies, he continues, set up distinct advisory offices, "with no administrative responsibility except to spread ideas and train teachers in new methods." "How Children Learn," p. 8; The Primary School Revolution in Britain, THE NEW REPUBLIC special report, October, 1967.

The Significant Others

Numerous factors influence programs of change, among them the power exerted by people not directly involved in the special activities. The role of Anytown's high school mathmematics chairman was discussed earlier. A second source of influence emanating from the high school was that of its superintendent.

An individual relatively new to the community, the superintendent was the first to hear of the Gifted Program. He urged the elementary district to participate. More important, he agreed to extend full cooperation to changes wrought by the new program. In Illinois, such agreements are crucial, for the state is characterized by a large number of dual districts. Many curricular innovations have foundered on this barrier.

But the high school district in Anytown moved far beyond a simple agreement to cooperate. Its teachers joined with elementary and junior high counterparts in in-service training programs. High school facilities were used for conferences and meetings. And overshadowing all of these activities was the beneficient influence of the superintendent.

The latter's departure from the community coincided with the end of the first stage of the demonstration project. The next two years witnessed a gradual decline in the cooperative efforts previously displayed, mainly because of a new style of administrative behavior exhibited by the incoming superintendent. A real breakdown of communication quickly ensued between the two district offices and the demonstration center director was caught in the proverbial middle.

In company with many other small cities, Anytown's classrooms contain a high percentage of married women. Frequently their husbands are leaders in the community. In other words, to paraphrase George Orwell, some teachers are more equal than others.

There is no denying that the intricate network of relationships encompassing these women, their husbands, and the links they have with other members of the community is difficult to clearly ascertain. However, if educational change is to take

place in the coutless small towns and rural districts across the nation, its representatives will have to display a better understanding of community dynamics and the multiple roles certain individuals can occupy.

Both of the demonstration directors in Anytown were frustrated by resistance from one sector of the school system. Though concrete evidence was never obtainable, the local rumor mill indicated that a local instructor, whose husband was also a school employee, instigated the rebuffs. Evidently she interpreted the directors' actions as a threat to her husband's status in the system and, eventually, in the community. An experienced teacher holding civic ties of long standing, she was much more powerful in the informal structure of the schools than an observer could logically anticipate.

Let there be no mistake: programs of educational change cannot be divorced from their economic-social-political consequences. Proponents of change must learn to quickly spot, and hopefully, cope with the "significant others." The above represents only two of several examples that could be cited from the Anytown experience.

Epilogue: "I Can Read A Book"

Toward the close of the final year of demonstration center operations in Anytown, the original director returned to the community in an attempt to assess the accomplishments and setbacks of the Gifted Program. By the time of his arrival in March of 1967, the decision had been made to phase out the demonstration center. Consequently, this section is somewhat of a post-mortem. The heading "I Can Read A Book" reflects the statement of a former member of the initial demonstration class. A sophomore last spring, she was deploring the inability of her mathematics teacher to explain issues. "He's not at all like Mr. _____ was in junior high," Mary said.

> When I ask him to explain a difficult item, he tells me to read the book. And I can read a book! What I need is some light thrown on the question.

Mary's statements are a reminder that change is not synonomous with improvement or progress. The teacher variable remains a critical factor and the interaction between instructor and student must be affected if beneficial change is to occur.

To attempt to isolate all the reasons why one teacher is effective in dealing with students and another is not would be an impossible task--there are just too many variables at stake. In the context of a specific operation such as the Anytown demonstration project, however, some factors can be identified as important in influencing teacher attitudes toward students. These would include:

> 1) program influence--the junior high school was in a special demonstration program in which teachers were greatly involved. Junior high personnel felt that the program, in order to be successful, must be student centered rather than content centered.
>
> 2) training--teacher attitudes were influenced by their experiences in a summer institute specifically designed for instructors who were to serve as demonstration teachers.

The same interest in students was not shown by the high school instructors. Teachers in the high school placed far more emphasis on content mastery than on the process of teacher-student interaction. They regarded these students as "gifted"; therefore, the need to deal with non-academic issues did not seem essential. A faster pace was viewed as the best method for dealing with such pupils. Second, in the high school only two instructors received continuous exposure to the summer institutes mentioned above. The impact of this training experience was not felt as strongly in the high school because a disproportionately small number of people shared similar experiences. Also, as mentioned elsewhere in this report, the demonstration director was not directly involved in high school activities. His presence in the junior high presented teachers there with an opportunity for discussing individual students and aided them in their attempts to develop strategies for dealing with the classroom behavior of students.

Looking back, two things stand out as crucial elements in the initial success of Anytown's demonstration center. One was reflected in a commitment on the part of demonstration teachers to the broad concept of a program which emphasized individual

needs. Reinforcing this commitment were the interpersonal relationships between teachers and the demonstration director, for these exchanges led to a continuing dialogue about students and their problems.

Student Reactions

Former participants in the special program at the junior high school had several telling comments relative to their experiences. Furthermore, they made some caustic observations concerning their work in elementary schools.

First of all, it is apparent that the new social studies curriculum presented two major problems. The emphasis on social science--sociology, anthropology, economics--was a radical departure from the past experience of students. Though they were able to read the accelerated content, as seventh graders they lacked the experiential background to fully comprehend social science concepts. Members of the class feel more effort should have been made to present the material in a historical context.

The directors are in agreement with the opinion expressed by these students. In addition, local instructors never mastered the task of using multiple sources of reading materials. We believe that new curricula projects should focus more on the instructional skills required for teaching the content.[13] It would be interesting

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[13] In one of the last research projects conducted by Hilda Taba, this noted scholar writes: This conclusion (in her reports) reinforces the general impression that unless teaching methods consistent with the innovative curriculum are used in the classroom, that curriculum becomes diluted, misused, and ineffectual. The most important observation that can be made from the data collected in this study is the centrality and power of the teacher's role in initiating cognitive operations and determining which kinds are open to students.

Taba, Hilda, Teaching Strategies and Cognitive Functioning in Elementary School Children. (San Francisco, Calif.: San Francisco State College: Cooperative Research Project No. 2404), pp. 228.

Virtually the same conclusion appears in a study of high school biology teachers. James J. Gallagher notes that "teachers have different approaches in terms of instructional strategy that results in different ideas and concepts being presented to the students."

Gallagher, James J. Teacher Variation in Concept Presentation in BSCS Curriculum Programs. (University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois: Institute for Research on Exceptional Children), p. 33.

to see project directors instigate inservice training programs prior to the adoption of new curricula rather than seeking to accomplish both objectives concurrently. Perhaps the materials could be taught to future instructors in the style desired by project developers.

Teaching behavior at the elementary level represents another point of concern to former members of demonstration classes. They look back at their early years and recall a domination of social studies and English. "Our grade school teachers hit only their strong areas," students remarked. "We did little in science and math," they continued. This limitation is not unique to Anytown's classrooms. It is likely that the impact of the UICSM program in the junior high years was intensified by the contrast between teachers there and the caliber of mathematics instruction the youngsters had previously received.

Oddly enough, there was little resentment directed at the elitist connotations of being a member of the accelerated classes. In fact, two specific cases may reflect positive features of grouping we tend to overlook. One of the Mexican-American boys said he was delighted that he had been placed in special classes. His record in high school bears out his contention that placement in the group increased his motivation.[14] A member of the second demonstration class entered junior high with the reputation of being an intellectual snob, a heartily disliked child. Very early in her first year in the program it was obvious that she was disconcerted by an inability to dominate the demonstration classes. Coming from a school where relatively large numbers of culturally disadvantaged children had been her classmates, Cheryl soon discovered that she was competing in a new arena. To her credit, she quickly

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[14] The same point was made by a Negro student enrolled in an honors program in the Washington, D. C. schools. Miss Denise Sewell, an honors student at Cardozo High School in that city, told interviewers:

> I honestly don't think I could have made it without the track system. It gives you more strength to be in a class where the kids really work.

As reported in the Washington Post, November 21, 1967, p. 21.

recovered, accepted the presence of others equally capable, and, in our opinion and that of her parents and teachers, emerged as a stronger, more relaxed person.

We do not pretend, though, that results of the grouping practices in Anytown are likely to shed any light on this hotly controversial topic. We do wish to submit that a program devoted to the development of human talent must be prepared to give more individual attention to students that we have customarily granted in the past.

Two Mexican-American boys were members of the original demonstration group. Mario, the student described above, has continued his interest in science. He wants to go to college, and, more important, expects to do so. His actions seem much more confident than was true of his junior high years. But Juan is another story. A stand-out in the 7th and 8th grades, consistently very high on socio-metric choices, this boy gave every indication of becoming an outstanding high school student. During his interview session last spring, Juan was extremely apathetic. He is working nights, has purchased a car, dropped from the wrestling team, and expresses little interest in school. Several factors must lie behind this marked change, but it was clear that neither his counselor nor his teachers were acknowledging the nuances of behavior created by his minority group status. True, they were vaguely aware of them, as are many experienced teachers; this awareness, however, was not mirrored in their relationships with Juan. Most Mexican boys are not expected to finish high school. Juan's keen interest in science is evidently sustaining him; Joe's personal attributes are lost in the larger setting of the secondary school. We would not be surprised to see him become a drop out.

Cindy is a third member of the original demonstration class. An only child whose father deserted the family years ago, Cindy is plagued with personal problems. Frequently her behavior is disoriented; she has few close friends, and Cindy is not an attractive youngster. But how she can write! And her reading interests and ability range far beyond that of her contemporaries. "There's no place for kids like me," said Cindy; "not in this town or this school." Essentially, she is correct. Our high schools find it difficult to cope with the "Cindys" of their student bodies.

Recent events across the nation suggest that this issue is steadily growing in importance.

Cindy's difficulties also are reflected in the case of June. A year younger, she was not selected for the accelerated classes. June had received one of the top scores on a creativity test given in the 6th grade. Though she was not otherwise qualified for the advanced classes, we did direct teachers' attention to her and to several others who had scored well on the same test. At first, the instructors would not believe that June could possibly have any ability. Her family was on the absolute bottom of the social structure in Anytown. A brother had been killed in a family quarrel. "They're all drunks," teachers explained. But June won them over. She received good grades in junior high and became a popular member of her class. In short, she received a great deal of personal attention.

In March, this same girl cried throughout most of the interview session. She's "lost" in high school; no attempt evidently was made to enroll her in art classes, where she has unusual talent. Teachers view her as a member of the _____ family. The joy and brightness of her 7th and 8th grade years somehow dissolved, leaving June a very sad and disillusioned youngster.

The attitude portrayed by the students toward teachers in the high school indicates how much students value being perceived as people rather than as a member of a captive audience. Mary's remark, cited earlier, namely--"I can read a book", says more than the statement indicates. Mary had been accustomed to a working relationship with two junior high school teachers who took time to care about her needs, and the needs of others, not simply as a student with a problem, but as a human being with needs and confusions. June, too, desperately needs such attention.

Student reactions point to many issues intrinsic to the realm of educational change. The Gifted Program, as it operated in Anytown, surely confirmed that a meaningful program of talent retrieval and development will require drastic and lasting revisions in current operational procedures.

Demands on Teachers

The need for inservice training, previously outlined on page 15, also touches on the issue of articulation of new programs. In Illinois, moreover, articulation frequently presents additional perplexities. Elementary school districts are often legal and financial entities without any link to secondary schools. The latter may be legally bound to educate pupils from a plethora of separate elementary districts. Anytown's high school was fed by eight of these districts, seven of them in the outlying rural area. Despite the best of intentions, there is no question but that the demonstration project added another burden to the high school's demanding job of program articulation. Both of us believe that as directors we should have done more to ease this transition. However, the high school principal, formerly head of the counseling department, feels that, at least, "we started them along the road." Time will tell whether this road will lead anywhere; in our opinion, it is certain to be a difficult journey.

Nor will inter-district cooperation suffice. Teachers must accept the changes, if they are to ultimately affect students. The necessity to involve instructors at the earliest possible moment is commonly accepted even though it may not be practiced on a broad scale. Anytown's teachers have other complaints, too.

They expressed a desire for more feedback. "There's a lack of communication," they complained, "especially at the elementary level." Some reasons for this condition were previously disclosed, but there is a serious need for school personnel to systematically study communication as it affects their particular operation. Formal approaches are fundamentally the same; but it is often the informal, and local, peculiarities that determine the fate of a new program.[15]

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[15]Anytown's situation is delineated in the work of Ronald G. Havelock and Kenneth D. Benne, "An Exploratory Study of Knowledge Utilization," Center for Research on Utilization of Scientific Knowledge, Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan. (mimeo). This excellent paper notes that "utilization chains are beset by two principal kinds of difficulties, the impermeability of barriers and the overloading of resource persons."

For example, elementary teachers in Anytown were supportive of the move towards ungraded schools, but they were distressed by the amount of detailed work necessitated by the new report cards accompanying ungraded programs. Local administrators simply did not view this complaint as a major factor; conversations with teachers revealed otherwise.

Like many school systems, Anytown's elementary district has experienced severe difficulties in implementing the new math. Compounding the problem is the inability to find knowledgeable consultants who can work with teachers. The need for "first aid" assistance is particularly acute, since uncertainty and anxiety on the part of instructors is readily transmitted into the total classroom situation. It is our belief that curriculum developers have underestimated the field of forces surrounding changes in public schools. Teacher insecurity is conducive to poor communication with the student. The latter's confusion hinders his ability to learn, and this condition quickly arouses parental anxiety, if not hostility. Nowhere is this interrelationship better illustrated than in the realm of mathematics, an area where the training and understanding of most adults is already at the lowest level of any specific field of knowledge.

Our experiences in Anytown lead us to suggest that the reform movement in mathematics has two basic weaknesses and that these deficits are easily transmitted from one area of study to another. But the situation in mathematics is aggravated by the poor mathematical understanding of the vast majority of American people.

First, the movement in mathematics reflects the dangers that can arise when commercial outlets purchase the rights to curriculum projects, mount selling campaigns to promote the materials, and then are ill-equipped or unwilling to provide adequate follow-up services. Second, we question whether any district should adopt a wholesale revision of subject matter content without assurance that help is available <u>locally</u>. There is much in the public schools of Illinois to suppor Sarason's charge that...

> many teachers are in trouble with the new math. Second, the sources

> of trouble are many but among the most important are the consequences of how it was introduced to teachers, and difficulty teachers have in voicing questions, problems, and doubts which they fear will be construed as a lack of intelligence and competence, and the tendency on part of administrators and supervisors to relate to teachers in a way conducive to one-way conversations.[16]

Parental Involvement

Controversial changes are certain to arouse parental concern. The effects of this concern were briefly described on the preceding page. However, it is now painfully apparent that we failed to truly involve parents and other adults.

Yes, the parents of youngsters in the accelerated classes were generally delighted with the program. The fact that we encountered little outward opposition, to us, is indicative of the superficiality of the demonstration project. Our secretary, a very competent and sensitive resident of the community whose sons were in the program, remarked: "The community really didn't care. That's why there is no concerted support to retain the project." Evidently, the program didn't "grab" either the students or their parents.

Administrative Support

Initially, the demonstration project received considerable support from administrators in both the elementary and secondary districts. As time moved on, cracks began to appear in this structure.

The critical change in high school superintendents was described on page 11. A year after, the junior high was to have a new principal too. Neither of these administrators had been involved in the planning and development of the demonstration program. It was virtually a foregone conclusion that their support of it would not compare with that of their predecessors.

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[16] Seymour B. Sarason, "The School Culture and Processes of Change," The Henry H. Brechbill Lectures, University of Maryland, January 10, 1966, page 16.

In addition, we were unable to maintain a strong relationship with principals of the elementary buildings. The most cooperative one bemoaned the project's departure. "(Director #2) has done a good job here," this principal commented last spring. "Admittedly, the pace of change is too slow, but I'm worried about who will take responsibility for pushing us now that he is leaving."

His remarks were echoed by an administrator in the central office. Agreeing that the rate of change was quite low, the latter said:

> Now you take (a building principal). He's sitting down there at _____ school. No deprived children, no parents pushing for change, so why get involved?" It's just too much trouble and work.

Summary

What generalizations can be drawn from our four years in Anytown? These conclusions will not startle anyone familiar with the problems encountered in programs of educational change, but they may serve to remind us anew of the task confronting proponents of reform movements.

1) The work load is staggering; demands on the time of key people are endless. We submit that a basic flaw in programs of change is the tendency to underestimate the need for competent personnel.

2) Unless the classroom situation is markedly improved, an observer can rightfully question whether the commitment of time and resources is justified. Again, change is not synonomous with improvement. Careful appraisal of this fact should lead to a closer examination of the requirements for improving education for American youth. The responses of students enrolled in Anytown's demonstration classes lend support to the charges of Dr. Harry Broudy, who writes:

> One looks in vain for any systematic discussion as to the demands of citizenship, of vocation, of living with some degree of sanity and satisfaction in the kind of world we may have when these children finish school. That pupils will learn more mathematics or biology or whatever else is in the package is the only factor that proponents and evaluators seem to be concerned with.[17]

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[17]Harry S. Broudy, "Needed: A Unifying Theory of Education," Curriculum Change: Direction and Process, ASCD, March 13-17, 1966, p. 22. An English scholar concurs that the new curriculum materials often fail to touch the child in ways that really matter and do not seem to have affective teachers to any marked degree. L. G. W. Sealey, "Looking Back on Leicestershire," ESI Quarterly Report, Spring/Summer, 1966, p. 40.

We would add that, in our opinion, it is crucial for someone clearly identified with the new program to work closely with the students and teachers participating in it.

3) Any significant change is certain to eventually spotlight underlying problems in the affected system. In Anytown, the talent development theme, in our judgment, pointed out certain injustices concerning the education of Mexican-American youth. Moreover, failure to react to these issues also deprived their classmates of opportunities to learn about another culture.[18] With the exception of a special project involving the purchase of science materials for Mario we were unable to directly influence the education offered to Mexican-American students.

Perhaps a fitting epitaph for Anytown's demonstration project is contained in the remarks of a woman teacher in the junior high. For several years she had worked in the grade school attended by most of the Mexican-American youth. "It has risen from 40 to 60 percent Mexican in the last five years," she said. "Yet we go right along as if nothing is happening over there. What about those kids?"

YES--WHAT ABOUT THOSE KIDS?

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[18] Mexican-Americans: A Handbook for Educators contains some excellent ideas on the integration of this culture with public school activities. It was prepared by Jack D. Forbes and is available from the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1 Garden Circle, Hotel Claremont, Berkeley, California.

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